

# Idiom by Lon Yan

## 一錯再錯

*yi2 cuo4 zai4 cuo4*

A 37-year-old woman had a big row with her boyfriend at their Yau Tong home. She stormed out of the house, saying she would jump into the sea.

Worried, the boyfriend called the police. The woman was subsequently found sitting on a bench at the seafront, soaking wet, apparently having made good on her threat but fortunately having the good sense to swim back to shore.

She was unhurt, but was taken to the United Christian Hospital for observation. While there, the woman plugged her cell phone into the wall for charging. Smoke soon came out of the phone and almost started a fire, and the mishap was apparently caused by a short circuit as the device was still dripping water. The media described her

behavior as “一錯再錯” (*yi2 cuo4 zai4 cuo4*).

“一” (*yi2*) is “one,” “once,” “錯” (*cuo4*) “an error,” “to make a mistake,” “再” (*zai4*) is “again,” “once more,” and “錯” (*cuo4*) is, again, “an error,” “to make a mistake.” Literally, “一錯再錯” (*yi2 cuo4 zai4 cuo4*) is making a mistake once, and making a mistake once more.”

It means “to repeat errors,” “to continue blundering,” “to make mistakes continuously.”

The idiom is used to describe people who keep making mistakes without learning from them. A student who repeatedly cheats in examinations is “一錯再錯” (*yi2 cuo4 zai4 cuo4*). An ex-convict who commits crimes again is another example of “一錯再錯” (*yi2 cuo4 zai4 cuo4*).

“一錯再錯” (*yi2 cuo4 zai4 cuo4*) can only end in utter failure.

### Terms containing the character “錯” (*cuo4*) include:

錯誤 (*cuo4 wu4*) – a mistake; an error

錯覺 (*cuo4 jue2*) – an illusion; a delusion

錯過 (*cuo4 guo4*) – to miss (an opportunity, a train etc)

過錯 (*guo4 cuo4*) – a fault; an offence